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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 000417

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES AMISOM WITH FOREIGN  
MINISTER

REF: A. LAGOS 83 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. STATE 019203

Classified By: Ambassador Robin R. Sanders for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) On March 7, Ambassador met with the Nigerian Foreign Minister Ojo Maduekwe, at his residence, to get a final decision on the GON AMISOM deployment as the extra grace days given to the Minister until March 5 had passed. Ambassador opened the discussion by noting that she realized the Foreign Minister had been on an assessment trip to Guinea Bissau when the deadline passed, but that the USG really needed a decision one way or another now on GON deployment to AMISOM. She further highlighted that she had sent him a comprehensive document on all USG military training to date -- some dating back 18 months or more -- that went to shore up GON peacekeeping capacity including the current JCET programs going on at the GON Jaji Training Center in Kaduna. Ambassador added that the GON's promise of deployment pre-dated her arrival and had at least been discussed with the GON for nearly two years. It had come to a point, she underscored, that we need a "date certain" for deployment, and if not, we would have to consider discussing the issues with other friends. The Ambassador then asked for the outcome of the Foreign Minister's discussion with President Yar'Adua on the point, and further inquired whether the Minister of Defense (MOD) and Service Chiefs were still reluctant to go to Somalia -- holding their same negative position in their presentations to Yar'Adua.

[1](#)2. (C) The Foreign Minister began by claiming that he had made some headway with getting the President to listen to him on the importance of Nigeria "living up to its international commitments even if the on ground situation had changed." He added that he thought Yar'Adua had soften in this regard, despite the service chiefs and MOD views. They were voicing the need for more capacity and assistance over and above what the USG had already provided, noting that the five million dollars in equipment was not enough to put GON forces in the peace enforcement role it would have to undertake in Somalia. The Ambassador interceding asked at this point, if the GON was going or not? Still reluctant to give a straight yes or no answer, the Foreign Minister further explained that if he had a little more time he might be able to sway the President, but quickly added that the Bashir indictment had

added to the GON's internal review of the AMISOM issue.

13. (C) Ambassador said that she doubted that the USG was willing to give this additional time since we had waited more than 18 months for the GON to fulfill its promise on Somalia, but wanted to hear why the GON felt that the recent Bashir indictment affected whether or not it would go forward on Somalia. Ambassador reviewed the points in ref B on the USG position on the Bashir indictment and Rome Statute. Maduekwe listened carefully, admitted that he had not yet shared with Yar'Adua USG views about finding another partner if the GON did not step up, and then shared with the Ambassador the discussion at the last GON cabinet meeting that touched on Sudan and Somalia. In the first order, he said that there is a sense that troop contributing countries like Nigeria in Darfur are not listened to, nor are their views respected by the West, particularly policy dialoguing on issues such as the Bashir indictment. He claims that the African Union (AU) forwarded the Peace and Security Committee's recommendation (on which the GON is a member) on the Bashir deferment for one year (from July 2008) to the United Nations and had not to this date received a response one way or another to its letter. Maduekwe also claimed that such an AU letter was sent to Washington from AU Commissioner Ping. The Fonmin added that the GON has troops on the ground in Darfur, and it would be its troops in harms way based on any action Bashir might pursue in reaction to the indictment; hence, the GON position on deferment. He went on that there was a sense in his government that there is never really a policy dialogue about what should be done or how it should be done, and there is concern that the same would happen if troops were sent to

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Somalia. The GON fear is that, as a troop contributing country in AMISOM, Nigeria would not be consulted on Somalia policy when it had its troops in harms way -- similarly to not being consulted on Darfur/Bashir policy, or its views taken into account on UN or ICC actions in Sudan, he added.

14. (C) The Ambassador said she was not aware of any AU letter to the USG or even from Nigeria on these views, but would ask about it. She added that she would also check to see that if the AU sent a letter to the UN SecGen whether it had been shared with any other UNSC members. She also pushed back by noting that even if these things had happen the USG views on deferment would be exactly what they are today given the horrible crimes by Bashir. On the Somalia issue, she stressed, that this was not new, and deployment was something the GON had agreed to do a long time ago way before the Bashir indictment or any of the other issues he was currently raising. She further added that she took the tenor of the conversation as meaning that it was not likely that the GON would move on AMISOM anytime soon, and that she would report back to Washington this view. The FonMin asked for a day or two to inform his President that if the GON did not go to Somalia that the USG would begin to engage other partners on this issue. He restated that he originally thought it was wiser to leave this morsel out in his last briefing to Yar'Adua believing that by sharing this, the latter would have said on the spot that it would be fine for the USG to find another country to go. Maduekwe claimed that his preference was to have the GON deploy because he believed in the supremacy of following through on international commitments, but saying again he was in the minority in the cabinet on this issue.

15. (C) Following the meeting, the confirmation came in 15 minutes later via email regarding the Foreign Minister's call on SecState. Ambassador passed the information back to Maduekwe by phone and he agreed to the date and time. She took advantage of the follow-up phone call noting that the AMISOM issue would likely be the central point of the discussion and that the USG would be very disappointed with the stance Nigeria has taken. Maduekwe said he appreciated that the Secretary would be seeing him in March, and will use this "good news" in his discussions with Yar'Adua on March 12

to see if he can get his President to move a little closer to supporting troop deployment to Somalia (Maduekwe left again for Guinea Bissau on March 10). He also added that he would be pushing during his Washington trip for an early meeting between President Yar'Adua and POTUS given that the Secretary said she would encourage this. The Ambassador reminded Maduekwe that she had read the transcript of the conversation he had with SecState, and what she said was that she would pass forward this information, not a promise of an early meeting, and that he should be mindful as to not provide a different impression to his President.

16. (C) Comment: The Foreign Minister claims to be the sole supporter in the cabinet on AMISOM deployment as we have stated earlier (ref A). We also recognize that he is cherry picking what and how much he is sharing with the President on this issue. This cherry picking also includes the MOD. It is clear that Yar'Adua, like with other things, does not have a clear picture of what is going on, nor how much we have in the past or are currently doing to help their capacity on PKO. The MOD and Service Chiefs are not impressed with the 5 million dollar USG equipment offer as they seem to want a lot more and for us to pay to revamp their entire armed forces. We would recommend seeing if the Foreign Minister can deliver by the time he meets with the Secretary on AMISOM, and if he cannot, then we should move on to other partners because in order to save face the GON will continue to drag this out. In addition, it will be hard for the Foreign Minister to actually say the word "no", even if he knows this is his government's real answer, because he claims that he supports troop deployment. So we will need to be mindful of this during his Washington visit. Discussions on Guinea Bissau reported septel.

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17. (C) Action request: Can we inquire whether the UN SecGen received such a formal request from the AU on Bashir deferment and whether we did? Clearly the GON believes and claims that other African Nations like the GON are waiting for a formal response from the UN.  
SANDERS